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(WASHINGTON, DC) -- Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO-3) voted in support of H.R. 2693, the Popcorn Workers Lung Disease Prevention Act, which passed the House today.

In 2000, Allen Parmet, a Missouri doctor in Kansas City diagnosed several workers from the Gilster-Mary Lee microwave popcorn factory in Jasper, MO with a lung disease called bronchiolitis obliterans, or "popcorn lung." The disease is rare, irreversible and deadly. The disease is believed to be caused by exposure to diacetyl, the butter flavoring in microwave popcorn.

In 2003, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) issued a guidance document recommending that workers' exposure to diacetyl be minimized, and the Food and Extract Manufacturers Association, the trade association of the flavoring industry, issued similar guidelines. Despite these recommendations, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has failed to issue a standard to protect workers from exposure to diacetyl, instead relying on voluntary efforts.

**"I am concerned by the threat diacetyl poses to American workers, especially because many of my constituents are employed by the Gilster-Mary Lee popcorn plant in Perry County," Carnahan said. "The standards required by H.R. 2693 are necessary to ensure workers have a safe and healthy work environment."**

H.R. 2693 will require OSHA to issue an emergency interim standard to minimize worker exposure to the chemical diacetyl. This standard applies to both the food flavorings industry as well as popcorn manufacturing and packaging. OSHA would then be required to issue a final standard within two years that would apply to all locations where workers are exposed to diacetyl.